

# Hobart authors add to city's history

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*Hobart History*

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## Historical society comes out with book, 'Memories'

Life on the job, being a child, Girl Scouts, volunteer firefighters, and the Ku Klux Klan—what do they all have in common?

Stories about them can all be found in *Hobart Memories*, a collection of reminiscences of everyday history in Hobart. *Memories* has just been published by the Hobart Historical Society.

The 58-page volume represents the second publication to come from the society's "Growing Up in Hobart" project. This project is designed to encourage people to capture their memories in writing so that they may be recorded in the history of Hobart.

The first publication, which came out last year, was so popular that a second printing was required, said Dorothy Ballantyne of the historians. Already nearly two dozen of the latest publication have been sold prior to any publicity.

Thirty-four contributors—including Ballantyne—wrote this time about life experiences. The authors range in age from 40-something to 80-something.

These contributing writers will be guests of honor at an open house on Saturday, July 20 from 1 to 3 p.m. at the historical society museum, 706 E. Fourth St. The public is invited to meet and chat with the authors then. Copies of the book will also be available for purchase.

The authors include Mary Allen, Myrtle Anderson, Eleanore Armontrout, Dorothy Ballantyne, Doc Boyd, Paula Scheid Brown, Elin Christianson, Mona Ciaslko, Ruth Demmon, Ada Easton, Jean Fasel, Mary Fick, Dorothy Gant, H. Richard Harrigan, and Eleanor Hawke.

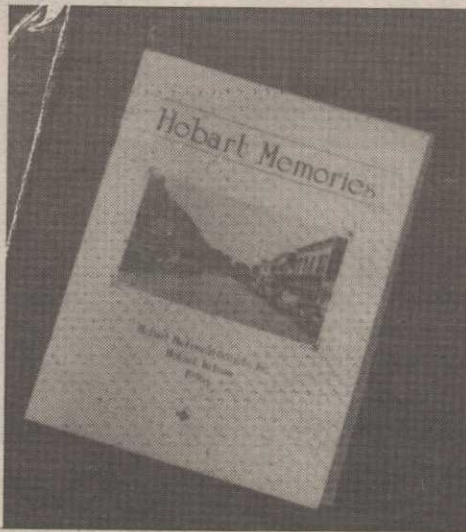
Also contributing were Midge Hedrick, Walter Isakson, Doris James, Alan Jentzen,

Letitia Keilman, Maryann Kerr, Bug Killens, Marie Koelsch, Henrietta Leistikow, Oscar Mason, Bethel Mattingly, Stewart Mattix, Dorothy Mellon, Franklin Rhoades, Steve Rice, Harriet Rooda, Donna Springman, Bee Stafford, Barbara Stevens, and Virginia Batzel Walton.

The book is divided into memories of decades from the teens to seventies, the Klan in Hobart, Girl Scouts, and other assorted memories. There's even a little bit written about each of the contributors.

Following are excerpts from *Hobart Memories*:

My third grade teacher was Hazel Strom (Scriba), a joy to have as a teacher. One day after classes she held a discussion period. When called upon, I, with consummate confidence, said I didn't have any questions except that I didn't understand where babies came from (I doubted the cabbage leaf theory), not did I understand infinity. I don't remember getting an answer. I think the dismissal bell rang, I'm sure, to the teacher's relief. Well, I learned about babies but I still don't understand infinity. In later years, Hazel



This is the latest publication of the Hobart Historical Society.

never let me forget my aplomb.

—Dorothy Dunning Ballantyne

I remember ration books and air raids. Dad (Joe Mellon) and my brother Bud (Mellon) were heading the air raid appointments, and somehow I got slated to watch for enemy aircraft on the roof next to our office building. Bill Scharbach had the time following me. Well, I had, still have, a phobia about heights, so Bill would always come early and help me up the steps to the roof! I later married Earl Gant, who joined the armed forces along with Tony Seed and Red Fifield.

—Dorothy Mellon Gant

We were surrounded by four large buildings: the school, Methodist Church, Roosevelt Gym, and to me, the finest building in town, the library. After school it was my second home—all those books, the glowing fireplace, and the friendly by stern librarians, first Dorothy Wood, then Bessie Banks. The library was special, too, for the social room in the basement. The Blue Birds and later on the Camp Fire Girls had their meetings there. Such rivalry on Memorial Day between the Camp Fire Girls and the Girl Scouts concerning which group was first in line in the parade to the cemetery!

—Henrietta Ragon Leistikow

Did you young people know that Hobart had one of the first miniature golf courses in this part of the country? The John Thiel family (he was a state representative) put one up in the late 1920s. The nine-hole course was in front of their home on West Third Street where the telephone building now stands. Since our families were friends and neighbors, we spent a lot of time there. Betty and Florence (the latter now Mrs. Wilbur Thompson) helped run the course. Mrs. Thiel sold homemade baked goods to the "golfers." I can still remember the burnt sugar frosting she made. It was great fun and great eating.

—Eleanor Rhoades Hawke

Everybody in town belonged to the Ku Klux Klan, I think, except about three or four people. One day they handed me a paper and said, "Fill this out, every red-blooded American belongs to this." I read it over, and I didn't like it. So I said, "I don't want to belong to anything like that." I made a lot of

enemies by not belonging.

—Doc Boyd

Hobart, to us, was just a big back yard. There was nowhere we couldn't go, as long as you had a few friends along. We rode the streetcars around town and, occasionally, even to Gary. Most of the times we paid the fare, but once in a while we tried to cop a free ride, only to be kicked off by the ever-observant conductor. We explored the Hobart Cemetery and Greenspan's junk yard. To do this by daylight got you into the "club," but to do it by flashlight at night made you a hero. There were few heroes in our gang.

—Stewart W. Mattix

I remember swimming in Lake George when it was legal. Who knows what unknown germs were lurking in that warm, brown water? Ignorance is bliss. The lake was a popular gathering place both in summer and in winter when it froze over for skating. Seems as if whenever it finally froze solid enough, it snowed, requiring a joint effort with shovels before the fun could start. But, no matter how cold, there was always one thin spot in the ice along the edge, just near where we built the fire, and I always found it.

—Thomas Byron (Bud) Killens

Can anyone remember the old high school without thinking about the basement? Entering the building from the west end, one went down a short flight of stairs to the lower level where some classrooms were located, and the eternal lockers lined the walls. Near the center of the school, under the original section (which dated from 1879, if I recall correctly) the basement hallway degenerated into a labyrinth-like maze of rolling floor; twisting, narrow corridor, and an overhead ceiling lined with a multitude of pipes. My impression, from the vantage point of 37 years distance, was of a submarine: dark, close, crowded, smelly, and hot.

—Steve Rice

*Hobart Memories* is available at the historical society museum, 706 E. Fourth St. The price is \$6 if purchased at the museum or \$7.50 by mail (includes postage and handling). Mail orders must be prepaid with checks made payable to the Hobart Historical Society. The address for mail orders is Hobart Historical Society, P.O. Box 24, Hobart IN 46342.

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